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UNCLAS GUATEMALA 000916

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [GT](#)

SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT RECEIVES LIMITED PRESS COVERAGE

REF: A. GUATEMALA 705

[1](#)B. GUATEMALA 683

[1](#)1. (U) Summary: Upon public release of the 2002 Human Rights Report (HRR) on March 31, Embassy issued a press statement from the Ambassador highlighting the USG human rights concerns in Guatemala and areas where we believe improvements can made. However, neither the report nor the Ambassador's statement received much public attention, as the recurring theme of the human rights situation was overshadowed by the war in Iraq and breaking political scandals. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (U) The Ambassador's statement reiterated USG concern over the human rights situation and expressed hope for improvement with the creation of CICIACS (Ref A). Only one daily newspaper, Prensa Libre, reported the release of the HRR and the Ambassador's statement. No radio programs covered the report's release. All press attention focused on the war in Iraq and the latest Guatemalan scandal, that of the duel between Attorney General Carlos de Leon and former Anti-Corruption Prosecutor, Karen Fischer. (Ref B)

[1](#)3. (U) Immediately after the public release in Washington, HROff and PolOff delivered a copy of the report to Sara Solis, Director of Bilateral Affairs, and Mario Cifuentes, Senior Assistant to the Minister, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. HROff also circulated the report amongst human rights contacts. All recipients thanked HROff for the detailed report and said they anxiously await translation, which post expects to have completed with the next two weeks.

[1](#)4. (U) Comment: Domestic scandals in an election year and a controversial foreign war crowded out news of the HRR's release this year. In addition, USG concern over the human rights situation here in Guatemala is common knowledge, and thus not particularly newsworthy. Once we have a Spanish translation, we will consider new PD opportunities to advance our human rights agenda. At a meeting April 3, however, Foreign Minister Gutierrez said he had read the report in its entirety. He appeared to find it balanced and objective.  
HAMILTON